A New Year, A Fresh Start: Tips for Making Changes

You have taken the first, most important step towards change - setting a goal. Make this New Year's Resolution different from the rest – make it a lifestyle change! Change does not happen overnight, but research shows that small changes over time lead to long lasting results. For example, losing 1 pound per week yields a 52 pound weight loss in a year.

Strategies for Achieving Your Goals

Set Process Goals – set goals like eating healthier or exercising more, rather than an outcome goal of losing 60 pounds.

Create Realistic Goals – ask yourself how confident, on a scale of 1 to 10, you are about achieving your goal. If your response is less than a 7, set your goal lower and more realistic.

Set Specific Goals – do not just say, "I want to exercise more." Instead, set a goal of walking 4 days a week for 30 minutes. Change "I will watch T.V. less" into "I will watch T.V. 30 minutes per day."

Create Measurable Goals – set goals that can be measured and tracked easily. "I will be on-time to work everyday" is easily measured. "Eating 1800 calories per day" can be measured as well.

Write Goals Out – write goals down, and then ask yourself many questions. How will you achieve the goal? When and where will you achieve the goals? How will you fit them into your schedule? What are possible roadblocks? How will you overcome obstacles? When you write out a detailed plan, you will be more likely to succeed in achieving your goal.

Get Social Support – involve your friends and family in supporting your towards your lifestyle change.

Forgive Yourself – be prepared for setbacks and mistakes. Instead of giving up, simply review your plan and make adjustments.

Track your progress – keep track of your weekly progress. Review every one to two weeks to evaluate your progress. For example, if you want to drink less alcohol, track and review how many drinks you have had every week.